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Subject: Technical analysis of the Open Office Suite
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The tests were completed on an IBM ThinkCentre with the following specifications:
- MS Window XP version 2002 SP2
- Pentium 3.00GHz
- 2.0 GB of RAM

The Open Office software tested:
- Sun Microsystems version 2.4
- Novell version 2.4 with OpenXML translator 1.1.0

Summary:
The primary focus of the testing was related to OpenOffice.org Writer, Calc and Impress. Limited testing was also completed on OpenOffice.org Draw, Base, and Math.

Based on the results of the testing, it is my opinion that the OpenOffice suite would be a suitable low-cost solution for word-processing, spreadsheets, and slide presentations for some agencies as long as the compatibility issues and limitations are understood. More specifically the Novell 2.4 version with the OpenXML translator 1.1.0, is recommended.

There are three categories of issues related to using OpenOffice.org on the state network. Details related to each category are listed below.
1. Authoring documents with OpenOffice.org applications and sharing them with other agencies.
2. Compatibility issues related to using OpenOffice.org to open and edit documents that originated with MS Office applications.
3. Training and supporting OpenOffice.org

Details:

1. Authoring documents with OpenOffice.org applications and sharing them with other agencies.
   - Sending OpenOffice.org documents via email will require that the saved document format in the OpenOffice.org applications be changed to match the state supported software. This will enable other state employees to open the documents created with OpenOffice.org with out error.
   - Some formatting issues may still be evident when these documents are opened with MS Office applications.
   - There could be similar formatting problems for users that use OpenOffice.org when they open documents originated in MS Office.

2. Compatibility issues:
Writer:
   - Opening documents written using MS Word will have a number of formatting issues that will require manual intervention.
   - Any MS Word documents that have linked or embedded objects will not open or display the object
   - Inserting linked worksheets is not allowed
   - Macros are not converted from MS Word
   - Formatting styles are only partially interpreted from MS Word

2. Compatibility issues (continued)

Calc:
- Opening workbooks written using MS Excel will have a number of formatting issues that will require manual intervention if they are to be corrected.
- Pivot tables will not function when developed in Excel. Pivot functionality will need rebuilt using Datapilot which has limited functionality as compared to Excel pivot tables.
- Workbooks that are linked to MS Access or other databases using the MS Query will not be able to connect and update
- Macros that are written with Excel will not function with OpenOffice
- Power users of spreadsheet applications will most likely be dissatisfied with Calc

Impress:
- You must check slide transition and timing because some are lost in the conversion.
- Embedded worksheets and pictures may be distorted requiring re-insertion
- Impress seemed to take a long time to import and open.
- It is possible to link objects but it will not allow you to link a portion of a spreadsheet. Impress links to the entire workbook through OLE.
- If the link is made in Impress it is important to note that in order to maintain the link you must save the presentation as an .odp file type for OpenOffice Impress. If you save as any other slideshow file type the link will be lost.

Base:
- MS Access files cannot be opened using the OpenOffice.org Base application.
- MS Access database files can be linked, however only the tables will be available, any forms reports, queries, or macros will not.
- It appears that this would be a stand-alone product and not interchangeable with other low-end database applications. Further testing would need to be done to assess the feasibility of using Base.

3. Training and supporting OpenOffice.org

Should an agency choose to use the OpenOffice Suite they should clearly identify the issues related to conducting business on the state network to the users. It must be made clear to them that OpenOffice is approved software but not supported. Generating simple documents, spreadsheets and presentations should be the scope of use. Advance functionality such as linking worksheets to databases, inserting worksheets into documents, developing macros etc. would be at the risk of the agency and not supported by state technical resources. User training would also be the responsibility of the agency using the OpenOffice Suite.

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